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❖THE❖OLD❖TESTAMENT❖STUDENT.❖

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IN the March and April (1886) numbers of THE STUDENT, special attention was called in various ways to what was believed to be a serious defect in the curriculum of the theological seminary. It was claimed that more work *in* the Bible should be done; and perhaps less work *about* it. It was argued that provision for the study of the English Bible in the seminary should be made. The subject was taken up by the religious press, and in some instances by the trustees of theological institutions. The results are already apparent. In not a few institutions has such study been introduced. It is worthy of notice that this position is supported by eight hundred and eighty-eight out of a thousand ministers in the active work of the pastorate, against forty-eight who do not look upon it with favor.*

CLOSELY connected with the subject of Bible-study in the seminary is that of Bible-study in the pastorate. It is a matter of some interest to know whether or not the minister, the divinely authorized interpreter and teacher of the Word of God, is really performing his functions in this direction. Whatever else he may have to do, and in these days the majority of ministers are compelled to do much work which they have no business to do, the pastor must *teach the Bible*. To teach it he must *know* it. To know it he must *study* it.

First arises the question, does the average pastor give to the study of the Bible a sufficient amount of time? Does the Bible occupy that share of his attention which it deserves? It may be taken for granted that the minister *studies*.† What does he study? On what is his time spent? And further, Shall one be satisfied with

* See page 133 of this number of THE STUDENT.

† Many of them, however, do not study.

that work done on the Bible which may be classified under the heads of devotional reading and sermon-preparation? These are necessary; but they are not Bible-study, although often wrongly regarded as such.

ANOTHER question suggests itself. Are the ministers of our day making an effort to keep up with the times in the line of Bible-study? With many of them the daily paper is a necessity ; because they must be up with the times. But how many are as anxious to know the results of modern scholarship as applied to the Bible? It is true, they may entertain the feeling that the work of modern scholars is unreliable, and so shun any contact with it. That class of ministers is not a small one which holds the belief that so far as concerns Bible-truth, whatever may be said of other truth, the older the statement, the more correct it is apt to be. Would one believe that out of every one thousand ministers there are four hundred and twenty-six, nearly one-half, who use only the Old Version in their personal study of the Bible? If the only difference between these versions was the printing as poetry of those portions of the Old Testament which are poetical, it is extremely difficult to understand why every real student of the Bible should not use the New Version in his personal study.

This is but one indication, and there are many, that the minister of the present age is slow to avail himself of what, if accepted, would prove most helpful. There is a widely prevailing timidity, called conservatism. It is not true conservatism. It is a timorous inertia.

MANY other questions relating to this same subject come up. Our readers are invited to study the article in this number entitled "Bible-study in the Pastorate; Figures and Facts." It will be found to contain much that is, to say the least, suggestive. In another number of THE STUDENT the matter will be considered in some of its more important applications.